LE·HI·HO NEWS SEPTEMBER 1977

THE LEHIGH VALLEY HOMOPHILE ORGANIZATION
P.O. BOX 1003 BETHLEHEM PA. 18016

NOTES.....

***Members of our Speakers Bureau have again been invited to a Human Sexuality class at Lehigh University on Oct. 19. Info: call Rick (866-6320).
***The annual summer hiatus in group activities was broken this year by July 24's swim party/picnic at a Saucon Valley estate. About 40 people came out to enjoy the water, sun, and food ranging from potato chips to quiche. Many stayed until sunset and had to be shooed away; the organizer and the Humphrey family appreciated your consideration in use of the house and grounds. A number of new faces showed up and expressed interest in fall meetings; we hope their hosts will inform them of dates. Several towels, a swim-suit, sunglasses, and a jacket were left behind, and will be available at the Sept. 25 meeting, or can be claimed from Bob at 866-6390.
***Roger Edelman has resigned both from the Board of Directors and from his position as Librarian. It is not foreseen that the latter position will be filled in the near future, and thus books from the Library will not, at least temporarily, circulate. Ken Burke has resigned as Programmer and Chairperson of the Board (new Chairperson is Bob Steelman) although he will still keep his seat on the Board. Future programs will be handled by various Board members, with possibilities including Dr. Francis Ringer, an authority on Theology and Homosexuality, a N.O.W. program, and a VD program by the Bi-City Health Bureau. Any other input appreciated!
***Five slots on the Board of Directors (4 two-yr. terms, 1 one-yr. term) will be open in the upcoming December elections. Anyone seriously or even tentatively interested in serving on the Board and getting involved in LE-HI-HO should keep this in mind. An election committee will be formed this month.
***DATES TO NOTE: Sept. 25, Sunday. 2:00 p.m., Unitarian Church of the Lehigh Valley (701 Lechauweki Ave., 2 blocks south of 1500 block of Broadway, Fountain Hill section of Bethlehem). GENERAL MEETING followed by POT LUCK SUPPER. Please bring a dish to serve 4-6 people and if possible call Bob (866-6390) to let him know what you're bringing or to get a suggestion to insure a variety of meats, vegetables, desserts, etc. Kitchen facilities available, coffee and tea provided; bring your own wine if desired, and friends, too! $2.50 charge for those not bringing food. These events have always been a success in the past, so look forward to this one. October 1, Saturday. 1:00 p.m. Rural Gay Caucus Meeting, New MCC Church Center, Harrisburg. Info: call Joe (437-2642). October 14, Friday. National Gay Blue Jeans Day. Proclaimed by National Gay Task Force. All gay people to wear blue jeans; societal pressure on straights to not wear them or if they forget not to wear them is expected to be educational and heighten awareness of prejudice experienced by gays. October 19, Wednesday. Board of Directors meeting (tentative). October 23, Sunday. LE-HI-HO General Meeting.

---EDITORIAL---

LE-HI-HO has had, as would any organization of eight years' duration, its share of ups and downs, of activity and apathy. When the concerned, responsible and active people, along with adequate funds, have existed in sufficient quantity, much has been accomplished by the group, and the slack periods have seemed inevitable as well as perhaps necessary as a period of rest. Somehow each September enough steam has been generated to propel the group through another year. Up until now new hands have always been found to fill vacant slots, but currently an empty seat on the Board of Directors has remained vacant all summer because no suitable candidate for appointment to to the remainder of the term of office is in sight. Current Board members

are unwilling to exert themselves further with new responsibilities or spread themselves any thinner. Recent resignations and imminent expiration of other terms, along with other situations, will result in the following: 1) As mentioned elsewhere, the hibernation of the library 2)absence of graphics in newsletters and probable brevity due to cost problems 3)loss of our computerized mailing list, which will necessitate the hand typing of 150 envelopes per month. If needed support does not resurrect itself, the future may also bring: 1)reduction of the size of the Board 2)reduction of LE-HI-HO News to barest minimum or possible abandonment altogether 3)absence of any programs at general meetings, which could lead to decreased attendance and eventual discontinuation of meetings. In other words, the high level of activity LE-HI-HO has maintained in the past two or three years will not be continued unless new people come along to help pick up the reins and fill the gaps, and the group may well cycle down to a slack period of minimal activity or worse. And, as always, the ones who will complain loudest about it will be the ones never willing to contribute their time, concern or money to the group. What will you do about it? -R.B.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Most readers are aware of the publicity given the Allentown Human Relations Commission's endorsement of a Gay Rights Ordinance amendment this past July, as well as the ensuing battle of Letters to the Editor in Allentown and Bethlehem newspapers. Although group members Joe Burns, Bob Steelman, Rick Balmer, Roger Edelman, Ken Burke and N.O.W. member Dixie White went to much effort to plan a conclusive presentation, the success of the vote probably came more from the groundwork already laid at previous meetings and from educational literature given to each commissioner. The 5-3-1 vote in favor of endorsing the adding of "affectional or sexual preference" to the already existing Human Relations Ordinance did not, however, reflect the atmosphere at this meeting, which was extremely hostile and anti-gay. While a few individuals had opposed the issue at previous meetings, eventual publicity brought the fundamentalists and other angry opponets out of the woodworks, with perhaps 50-75 of them present and a far, far smaller number of supporters. Group members had mostly praise for the impartial manner in which Director Robert Manley and Chairperson Selma Telles handled the meeting, although they were upset with last-minute guidelines for number of speakers allowed, time limits, etc., which were again changed at the meeting itself and which necessitated a quick shuffling of speakers. Initially only two pro and two con speakers were allowed, although audience pressure led to recognition of more. Rick Balmer and Bob Steelman were the two initial pro speakers, with the former especially experiencing hostile reaction from the audience and even angry interruptions from some commissioners who questioned the legitimacy of discrimination evidence presented; Robert Romanchek was here the most vocal opponet, but the evidence was ruled sufficient. Many were shocked to hear Dr. Frank McVeigh, a Muhlenberg sociologist, proclaim as one of the con speakers that gay people were not a legitimate minority because they voluntarily "chose" their sexual orientation and thus were deserving of no special rights or privileges. Other negative speakers dredged up all the oldest and most worn myths imaginable, with the discussion very heated at times. Fine support statements came from, among others, Allentown school teacher and N.O.W. president Anne Peaslee, and Moravian College psychologist Arthur Lyons. The whole event with its courtroom atmosphere which seemed to put homosexuality on trial completely left the issue at hand, a fact which was probably recognized by most of the commissioners. What will happen next is impossible to foresee, although City Council is certainly expected to be much tougher and homophobic , and what additional organizing our "enemies" may do is unknown. Obviously much more support is needed, especially from Allentown proper, and if you can offer any, please call Joe Burns at 437-2642.